DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 420 887 CS 509 860

AUTHOR	Enger, Tracy; Russell, Nancy; Setzer, Jill; Walkanoff, Jeanette
TITLE	Methods of Improving Active Listening Skills with Relation to Following Directions.
PUB DATE	1998-05-00
NOTE	56p.; M.A. Action Research Project, Saint Xavier University and IRI/Skylight.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses (040) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Action Research; Cognitive Processes; Elementary Education; Grade 3; Grade 4; Grade 5; Grade 8; Instructional Improvement; Learning Strategies; *Listening Comprehension; *Listening Skills; *Student Improvement; Tables (Data)
IDENTIFIERS	Active Listening; *Direction Following; *Listening Strategies

ABSTRACT

A program was developed for improving listening skills so as not to interfere with the cognitive processing of directions. The targeted population consisted of third, fourth, fifth, and eighth grade students in a growing middle class community located in the Midwest United States. Problems of decreased listening ability were documented through educational literature which addressed numerous causes and treatments in relation to listening strategies. Analysis of probable cause data showed that students reported a consistent need to hear a message more than once to fully comprehend its meaning and respond to it. In addition, environmental factors interfered with cognitive processing of directions. Faculty reported similar inabilities of children to comprehend and act upon oral directions. Review of the literature showed that listening skills are not being taught in school. Misinterpretation, influences of mass media, environmental, physical, physiological factors, and student choice also interfere with the ability to comprehend oral messages. A review of solution strategies suggested by the literature resulted in the selection of an intervention program which teaches students an awareness of the concept of listening as well as listening strategies to improve comprehension of oral messages. The program will teach children to prepare themselves for oral messages so they can respond appropriately. Post-intervention data indicated an increase in students' listening skills as well as a greater awareness of themselves as listeners. (Contains 13 tables of data and 19 references; various sample forms are appended.) (Author/CR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 420 887

CS

METHODS OF IMPROVING ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS WITH RELATION TO FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

Tracy Enger
Nancy Russell
Jill Setzer
Jeanette Walkanoff

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University of IRI/Skylight
Field-Based Masters Program
Chicago, Illinois

May, 1998

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
T. Enger
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CS505860

SIGNATURE PAGE

This project was approved by

Cindy S. Hanson
Advisor

Marsha Halma
Advisor

Beverly Gulley
Dean, School of Education

ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for improving listening skills so as not to interfere with the cognitive processing of directions. The targeted population consisted of third, fourth, fifth, and eighth grade students in a growing middle class community located in the Midwest. The problems of decreased listening ability were documented through educational literature which addressed numerous causes and treatments in relation to listening strategies.

Analysis of probable cause data showed that students reported a consistent need to hear a message more than once to fully comprehend its meaning and respond to it. In addition, environmental factors have a significant role in interfering with cognitive processing of directions. Faculty reported similar inabilities of children to comprehend and act upon oral directions. Further results showed a decrease in ability to monitor their own misunderstanding of oral messages. Reviews of literature show listening skills are not being taught in schools as well as a decreased awareness to encourage children to improve their listening ability. Misinterpretation, influences of mass media, environmental, physical, and physiological factors and student choice also interfere with the ability to comprehend oral messages.

A review of solution strategies suggested by literature combined with knowledgeable others resulted in the selection of an intervention program which teaches students an awareness of the concept of listening as well as listening strategies to improve comprehension of oral messages. The program will teach children to prepare themselves for oral messages in order to respond appropriately.

Post intervention data indicated an increase in students' listening skills as well as a greater awareness of themselves as listeners.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT 1

General Statement of the Problem 1

Immediate Problem Context 1

Surrounding Community 5

National Context of the Problem 8

CHAPTER 2 - PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION 10

Problem Evidence 10

Probable Causes 15

CHAPTER 3 - THE SOLUTION STRATEGY 20

Literature Review 20

Project Objective 27

Process Statements 27

Project Action Plan 27

Methods of Assessment 30

CHAPTER 4 - PROJECT RESULTS 31

Historical Description of the Intervention 31

Presentation and Analysis of Results 32

Conclusions and Recommendations 34

REFERENCES 37

APPENDIX

A LISTENING TO DIRECTIONS STUDENT SURVEY 39

B LISTENING TO DIRECTIONS PARENT SURVEY 41

C LISTENING TO DIRECTIONS TEACHER SURVEY 43

D PICTURE SURPRISES PRE-TEST 45

E DRAWING A PICTURE PRE-TEST 47

F FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS CHECKLIST 49

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted third, fourth, fifth, and eighth grade classes exhibit poor listening skills that interfere with cognitive processing of directions. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes a following directions checklist, results from student/teacher/parent surveys, and student pre-tests which assessed listening skills.

Immediate Problem Context

The description of the setting includes three neighboring schools within one county. Site A is part of a community unit school district in a suburban city in the Midwest and is one of five elementary schools in the public school district serving grades kindergarten through fifth. Site A is a two-story brick building located in a residential area. It consists of three sections of kindergarten through third grade, and two sections each of fourth and fifth grades. One male principal, the educational leader, is responsible for overseeing the curriculum, assessment, and building and grounds maintenance. He is also an ambassador to parents and the community and has the final authority with discipline problems. The classroom teachers are responsible for a comprehensive academic program, which includes accelerated programs, general programs, and modified inclusion programs. The curriculum focuses on mathematics, integrated language, science, social studies, computer education, health, and teacher-developed curriculum. Students receive weekly instruction from specialized teachers in two areas: 50 minutes of music and 50 minutes of physical education. A tutoring program is offered for 60 minutes twice a week. The fourth and fifth grades utilize a concept known as Regular Education Inclusion (REI).

Sites B and C are part of a community consolidated school district in a small, suburban city in the Midwest. Site B is a two-story brick building located at the intersection of two local highways. It is comprised of grades three through five and has one female principal responsible for the day-to-day activities and administration of this building. The classroom teachers are responsible for a comprehensive, academic program, which also includes accelerated programs, general programs, and modified inclusion programs. The curriculum focuses on mathematics, reading, language arts, science, social studies, computer education, health, and art awareness. Students receive weekly instruction from specialized teachers in three areas: 90 minutes of physical education, 60 minutes of music instruction, and 20 minutes in the learning resource center.

Site C is a single-story brick building located within a residential neighborhood. It is comprised of grades six through eight and has one male principal responsible for the day-to-day activities and administration of this building. Site C also has one male vice principal whose primary responsibility is discipline. The school adopts the philosophy of the middle school concept in which the classroom teachers are divided into two teams per grade. The curriculum is separated into the subject areas of: mathematics, reading, language arts, science, and social studies. Students receive weekly instruction in physical education for 220 minutes. Site C has an elective program in which the students choose among choir, band, art, drafting, or Spanish for 220 minutes each week.

The following tables will provide information relevant to the settings of the three sites. Table 1 centers on the racial/ethnic background and economics of the school population.

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Background and Economics of the School Population

Demographics	Site A	Site B	Site C
Total Student Population	409.0	734.0	644.0
White	8.7%	94.4%	93.0%
Black	68.8%	1.4%	0.9%
Hispanic	21.7%	2.3%	2.6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	1.6%	2.6%
Native American	0.0%	0.3%	0.5%
Low-Income	70.3%	5.9%	4.8%

Low-income students receive public aid, live in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, are supported in publicly-funded foster homes, or receive free or reduced-price lunches. Site A has approximately 65% more low-income students than Sites B or C. In addition, Site A has approximately 67% more black students than Sites B or C. In contrast, Sites B and C have approximately 94% more white students than Site A. Limited-English-Proficient students who are eligible for bilingual education also exist at the three schools (3.7% at Site A, 0.7% at Site B, and 0.2% at Site C).

Table 2 also delineates the student population by depicting attendance patterns. Site A has a considerable amount of student mobility and number of chronic truants in comparison to Sites B and C. Attendance in the three sites is significantly high.

Table 2

Attendance Patterns of the School Population

Patterns	Site A	Site B	Site C
Attendance	94.5%	92.8%	95.1%
Student Mobility	49.6%	10.2%	14.5%
Chronic Truancy	2.6%	0.0%	0.5%
Number of Chronic Truants	11.0	0.0	3.0

Table 3 illustrates the ethnic background as well as gender of the teachers at each of the three schools. In all three districts the teacher population is predominantly white and female.

Table 3

Racial/Ethnic Background and Gender of the Teachers

Demographics	Site A	Site B	Site C
Total Teacher Population	24.0	43.0	36.0
White	75.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Black	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Male	6.0%	5.0%	8.0%
Female	94.0%	95.0%	92.0%

Table 4 summarizes the average class size and the daily minutes apportioned for the core subjects per five-day school week. English includes all language arts courses. Site B has larger class sizes than Site A or C. All three schools spend a large part of their day teaching English content. Physical education in Site A and B is disproportional to the amount of time spent teaching the academic core subjects.

Table 4

Average Class Size and Time Devoted to the Teaching of Core Subjects (Minutes per Day)

Characteristics	Site A	Site B	Site C
Class Size	22.3	28.4	26.0
Mathematics	50.0	60.0	44.0
Science	30.0	40.0	44.0
English	100.0	115.0	88.0
Social Science	30.0	40.0	44.0
Physical Education	10.0	18.0	44.0

Surrounding Community

Site A is located on the east side of a suburban city in Illinois. It is about 40 miles north of a major metropolitan area in the Midwest. Site A is also adjacent to the only naval training base in the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce (August, 1994), the population of the community of Site A is 34,529. The majority of the residents in this community are white. There are small numbers of other ethnic cultures. The median household income is $25,500 with the median home value being $64,000.

Sites B and C are located within the same village on the northern edge of the county. It is about 50 miles from a major metropolitan area in the Midwest. According to

the U.S. Department of Commerce (August, 1994). the population is 2,857 with the ethnic culture being predominantly white. The median household income is $37,872, and the median home value is $154,049.

The two school districts have specific characteristics based on a number of criteria. Table 5 examines the racial/ethnic background and gender of the districts' teachers. Both districts have a high number of white, female teachers. Site A has 25% more black teachers than Sites B and C.

Table 5

Racial/Ethnic Background and Gender of Districts

Demographics	Site A District	Sites B-C Districts
Total Teacher Population	223	103
White	71.2%	97.1%
Black	25.2%	0.0%
Hispanic	2.2%	0.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.3%	2.9%
Male	23.7%	7.8%
Female	76.3%	92.2%

Table 6 compares the two districts' years of teaching experience, educational attainment, and pupil-teacher along with pupil-administrator ratios. Site A has a slightly larger veteran staff than Sites B and C. Site A also has about an equal amount of teachers with their Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Sites B and C have a less experienced staff with the majority of its teachers having only a Bachelor's degree.

Table 6

District Teacher Experience, Education, and Pupil Ratios

Characteristics	Site A District	Sites B-C Districts
Average Teaching Experience	14.3 Yrs.	10.7 Yrs.
Teachers with only Bachelor's Degrees	52.1%	61.2%
Teachers with Master's and Above	47.9%	38.8%
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	19.0:1	24.4:1
Pupil-Administrator Ratio	168.5:1	338.6:1

Table 7 contains salary figures and the operating expenditure per pupil for the two districts. The average teacher salary is slightly higher in Site A than in Sites B and C. On the other hand, Site A's administrator salary is slightly lower than Sites B and C. Site A also spends a few thousand dollars more per pupil than Sites B and C.

Table 7

Average Financial Indicators

Money Allocated	Site A District	Sites B-C Districts
Teacher Salary	$39,097	$36,509
Administrator Salary	$61,879	$66,607
Operating Expenditure Per Pupil	$ 5,634	$ 3,768

National Context of the Problem

The problem of poor listening skills that interfere with cognitive processing of directions has become more apparent in recent years. Half of each child's school day is spent listening to the teacher and to their peers (Wolvin & Coakley as cited in Anderson & Brent, 1994) and they often do it ineffectively (Jalongo, 1996). A growing number of children do not possess the capabilities to listen to and interpret a set of directions given by instructors. According to Lundsteen (as cited in Jalongo, 1996), "Listening is the process used to convert spoken language and sound into meaning in the mind" (p. 22). Because of this theory, children are expected to hear the directions given orally, interpret the meaning, and then act appropriately in response to their interpretation. In addition, children are repeatedly exposed to hundreds of noises, oral messages of sorts, and distractions that often interfere with the lessons being presented. The amount of teacher time spent addressing the issue of cognitive processing of directions has added to a growing frustration level not only for the teacher, but for the student as well.

A child's level of progress in academic domains is highly dependent on their competencies as listeners (Atkin as cited in Anderson & Brent, 1994). If the directions given are not being processed, it makes it difficult for a child to be successful on any given task. Teachers think of listening as a natural skill that will develop given enough time and practice. Few schools teach listening because that skill seems so simple; yet many researchers have rejected listening as too complex to be the subject of study (Strother, 1987). It has been said that 80% of what one knows is acquired through listening, but most adults operate at no better than a 25% efficiency level, suggesting that practice alone does not lead to the skill (Hundsaker as cited in Anderson & Brent, 1994).

To add to the concern, children are faced with varying conditions, both physical and psychological, that aid in the interference of cognitive processing of directions (Garman & Garman as cited in Jalongo, 1996). Physical conditions may include: fatigue, abuse, hunger, illness, bathroom needs, and/or room temperature. Psychological

conditions may include: mental health, intellectual ability, attention span, ability to focus, language proficiency, interest in the message, perceptions of the speaker, ability to process information at the speaker's rate, and/or self-esteem as a listener/learner (Garman & Garman as cited in Jalongo, 1996). With any number of these factors in combination or in isolation, children become unable to decipher the messages appropriately and act upon them in an efficient manner.

Finally, there may be a developmental difference in the relationship between working memory capacity and following directions, which require a certain degree of memory skills. The role of working memory in following directions seems to increase as children age. According to a study done by Carullo, Collins, and Engle (1991), "...working memory is limited in its capacity and there are individual differences in that working capacity" (p. 254). This affects each child's ability to process information delivered on certain tasks. If this is indeed developmental in nature, then one must conclude that children's ability to store the message given in a set of directions in their working memory and their ability to retrieve that message would greatly depend on their stage of development.

In conclusion, the problem of poor listening skills in relation to the difficulties with cognitive processing of directions has many avenues of study. Children are having more difficulties interpreting a set of directions which is leading to a decline in academic performance. If listening is not a skill that children naturally possess or a skill that children will gradually acquire, then teachers need to find effective methods to increase the active listening capacity of these children.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document the extent of poor listening skills that interfere with cognitive processing of directions, anecdotal records were retained over a period of the first three weeks. The records consisted of: teacher/student/parent surveys, following directions charts, and pre-tests.

Surveys

To document that a problem exists, 84 students ranging from grades three through eight, 66 parents of those children, and 38 teachers participated in a survey (Appendix A, B, and C). The findings of the survey showed that most students wanted directions to be given on average of one or two times. However, teachers have found this to be inconsistent with actual classroom practice. Table 8 shows that students may "like" to only hear directions once or twice, but teachers find it necessary to repeat directions more often. Only three percent of students admitted that directions needed to be given three or more times. Parents find agreement with teachers in the number of times directions are actually given. Sixty-eight percent of parents need to give directions at least two times before their children can begin a task. Twenty-nine percent only need to give directions once.

Of the thirty-eight teachers that participated in the survey, the majority agree with parents. In fact, 84% stated that directions must be given at least two times before students can get started. The discrepancy among students, teachers, and parents seemed to come from the distinction between how many times directions "need" to be given and how many times children "want" them to be given.

Table 8

Number of Times Directions Need to be Repeated As Reported in Survey

# of Times	Students	Teachers	Parents
1 Time	52%	16%	29%
2 Times	45%	55%	57%
3 Times	2%	24%	9%
4+ Times	1%	5%	5%

Table 9 shows many factors that prohibit students from listening successfully to directions. These include: noise level, hunger, classroom temperature, time of day, subject area, and type of task By far students felt that noise was the biggest contributor to missed directions. Students reported having a difficult time filtering out teacher directions over the classroom noise. Both hunger and type of task received approximately 13% of the votes and time, subject area, and temperature had little effect on a child's ability to process directions.

Parents agree that noise is the main cause of missed directions. Forty-eight percent stated that their child had difficulty hearing them when the noise in the house was high. Type of task rated second at 22%. Subject area affects 14% of children at home, and only a few are affected by time of day, hunger, and/or room temperature.

Teachers, at 53%, felt the same as students and parents with regards to noise level. Type of task and time of day were both under 25%. Although, in the middle school, teachers feel that the afternoon classes in particular are noisier and sometimes less productive. According to teachers, hunger, classroom temperature, and subject area had little or no effect on their students.

Table 9

Factors Inhibiting the Ability to Listen to Directions

Factors	Students	Teachers	Parents
Noise Level	51%	53%	48%
Hunger	12%	3%	5%
Room Temperature	5%	3%	2%
Time of Day	9%	18%	9%
Subject	8%	0%	14%
Type of Task	15%	23%	22%

Table 9 illustrates a definite interference with processing of directions. Since these factors are proven to lead to poor listening, it can be assumed that this problem truly exists.

Although there are many factors that prohibit students from focusing their attention on the directions, Table 10 shows delivery of the message can play a substantial role. Students felt the best way to deliver instructions was to present them both orally and written. Thirty-five percent of students felt comfortable with only oral directions, and 5% preferred written directions only. Students commented that the length of the directions may have an effect on their preference.

Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that both oral and written directions were necessary for student success. For example, teachers tend to use the chalkboard, overhead projector, and handouts to assist in the delivery of directions. This appeals to auditory and visual learners. Only 18% felt oral directions alone were necessary, and even fewer felt written directions were best.

Parents felt the best type of directions were delivered orally only. The majority, at 66%, stated that this method was the most effective. On the other hand, 32% used both

oral and written, and only 2% of parents write directions down. Often times, parents do not have the time to write down each and every direction for their children. If children are not accustomed to seeing written directions at home, then by the time they enter school, their ability to process directions has not been developed. Because of this, their ability to process directions does not meet the expectations of the school district and community. To further document evidence that poor listening skills interfere with cognitive processing of directions, a pre-test was given to each student at the three sites.

Table 10

Preferred Method of Delivery of Directions

Type	Students	Teachers	Parents
Oral Only	35%	18%	66%
Written Only	5%	3%	2%
Oral and Written	60%	79%	32%

Pre-test

Sites A and B were given a test in which students were asked to dr: : variety of shapes with varying sizes and specific locations on the page (Appendix D). The teacher of Site C gave 13 specific directions in which students needed to draw objects with varying degrees of difficulty and complexity (Appendix E). All three tests were given without any preparation or discussion of the contents. Directions were not repeated after being given once.

The results from all three sites were consistently low. Site A had a class average of 3.7 correct answers out of 10. The highest score was 8 out of 10, and two students scored 2 out of 10. The class average at Site B was 5 correct answers out of 16. The highest score was 13 out of 16, and 2 out of 16 was the lowest score. Site C had a class average of 8 out of 13 directions. Two students had the highest score of 11 out of 13,

while two other students scored the lowest at 6 out of 13. Since the scores on the pre-test were consistently low, this provides evidence that there is a problem with children processing directions. The checklist will also support that this problem exists.

Checklist

In addition, a "following directions chart" was used before any topics were taught during regular classroom instruction. The chart assisted in documenting the number of times the directions needed to be repeated before students could work independently on the task (Appendix F). The teacher at Site A decided on recording the number of times directions had to be repeated during math class. Over a period of four weeks with biweekly observations, most students needed to hear the teacher's directions three times. The two Site B teachers used the following directions chart once a week during a period of five weeks. Half of the students needed to hear the directions three times before being able to work independently. Site C's teacher chose to record the number of times directions had to be repeated during science instruction. Over a period of five weeks with documentation taking place biweekly, most students needed to hear the directions three times to accomplish the task. Teachers noted that as the weeks progressed, the amount of times directions needed to be given gradually decreased. In addition, teach felt they became more proficient in using the techniques for delivering instructions. Consequently, students became more receptive in practicing the skills presented.

The surveys, pre-tests, and checklists show that children have difficulties processing oral directions. Through the surveys it was apparent that students needed to hear the directions more than once. The pre-tests showed low scores of children following oral directions indicating that a problem exists. The teacher checklists were further evidence that children needed to hear directions more than once. Results from the checklists are illustrated in Table 11. The causes will be explored in the following section.

Table 11

Number of Times Teacher Needed to Repeat Directions Before Independent Task

# of Times	Site A	Site B	Site C
1 Time	23%	25%	5%
2 Times	27%	25%	33%
3 Times	50%	50%	62%

Probable Causes

In recent years, the listening skills of children have declined. Many teachers and parents have realized that it is necessary to repeat directions for children to respond. The causes for the decline in listening skills can be attributed to several factors both supported in the literature and through direct observation.

Listening Skills Not Being Taught

One cause is that listening skills are not being taught. Nationwide, there is no program or direct instruction to actually teach children how to listen. According to Edwards (1991), "Analysis of fifteen textbooks used on teacher education programs dealing with communication skills, mentioned listening on only 82 pages out of a total of 3,704" (p. 4). Because textbooks do not address listening in their program, children do not receive enough instruction to make them capable of knowing how to listen. Furthermore, teachers cannot solely rely on commercial materials to provide the foundation for listening (Winn, 1988).

Unfortunately, little research has focused on listening since the 1950's and 1960's. Nor has listening received substantial attention in textbooks and professional journals, even though educators believe that listening is important for the development of oral language, reading, and writing. The emphasis on reading and writing has crowded out attention to listening (Paulos & Swafford, 1993). Ironically, many teachers are often

frustrated with students' lack of listening skills, but find it increasingly difficult to fit the instruction into the already filled school day.

Funk and Funk (1989) agree that teachers feel the elementary curriculum is already too crowded:

> Many teachers believe that listening develops naturally so they need not attempt to teach listening. Others feel listening cannot be taught or if taught, it cannot be evaluated. Possibly the major factor in the neglect of listening instruction is that many teachers have received little if any instruction in how to teach it, and they feel inadequate to try. (p. 660)

Teachers' Lack of Proper Training

Teachers with differences in teaching styles, confidence, as well as an ability to promote confidence and success in students also feel the inadequacy and lack of proper training (Bygrave, 1994). All teachers have a college degree, but very few have had a course on how to teach listening skills. Subjectivity in the teaching of listening skills, as well as the evaluation, adds to the problem. Because of this, teachers may place a varying degree of emphasis on the importance of encouraging children to even use their listening skills.

Listening Skills Are Not Encouraged

Not only are listening skills not being taught, they are not encouraged as an integral part of a child's development. Children should be able to make appropriate responses to what they hear, ask relevant questions, or make pertinent comments in order to strengthen not only the ability to hear a message, but to evaluate it and respond to it. In school, most listening is attending to what the teacher is saying in order to memorize it rather than being encouraged to process the information more deeply (Cramond, 1993). Children tend to "tune out" when a teacher is lecturing and therefore have not fully developed their ability to listen. The outcome of this inability is a lack of involvement

when a teacher is speaking. This "snowball effect" leads to a general lack of listening skills as children develop.

Children's Lack of Listening Skills

According to Healy (1990), the lack of an "inner voice," being able to think things through, underlies a host of listening problems. More and more frequently, students tune out, forget oral directions, and can't keep their attention focused. Researchers believe that the ability to hear an inner voice, a fundamental skill for thinking logically, is lacking in today's children (Healy, 1990).

Some children have a general lack of ability in understanding directions. The problems may stem from word retrieval, word knowledge, phonological processing and/or listening comprehension (Bygrave, 1994). Those children who exhibit any or all of the deficiencies in encoding and retrieval may find comprehension of directions more difficult. Individual differences in working memory capacity are related to differences in comprehension and following directions (Bygrave, 1994).

Misinterpretation can interfere with the cognitive processing of directions. "Listener expectations affect what is heard and comprehended. Sometimes we look for the meaning we expect or want" (Schnell, 1995, p. 4). For example, a boy who asks the teacher's assistant if he can go outside, and receives a response of "Go ask the teacher," may convey his request to the teacher as "She said I can go outside if it's all right with you."

Another theory of misinterpretation comes from Pearce (1995) who states that subjective listening can interfere with a message. Students add a positive or negative emotional component to the message they hear, and it tends to bias the interpretation. Emotional responses serve as a barrier to effective listening.

There are many factors that cause the lack of listening skills in children. None are more frustrating than the interference of television. In our society today, the television serves as one of our most influential factors in a child's development.

Amount of Time Students Watch Television

A recent survey done by Edwards (1991) found that children between the ages of 5-12 years are watching television from 4-6 hours a day. This leads to more passive listening rather than attentive listening. Children are hearing things continuously throughout their waking hours, but only listening to a select number and interpreting only a very few. Children who are exposed to mass doses of media influence tend to engage in less active listening. The children are not involved in responding nor reacting to what they hear. Such activities develop poor listening habits and reduce the opportunity for more productive listening experiences (Winn, 1988).

An increase in the amount of time spent on television also leads to a disinterest in a child's own attitudes about the value of active listening. Cramond (1993) states that children have no curiosity about their own mental processes nor eagerness to develop those capacities further. As children listen to a message, they have no interest in the relationships between what they hear and what they already know. There is no evidence of any metacognition. Some children are not confident in their abilities and possess an unhealthy attitude about failure. Once a child has his/her mind set on failure, any form of distraction can interfere with a child's ability to process directions.

Physical Distractions

Physical distractions often play a role in misunderstanding directions. These are, quite simply, noises in the environment that limit the ability of the listener to receive the intended message. Classroom distractions should be considered when delivering a message (Schnell, 1995). Factors such as temperature, time of day, hunger, subject area, type of task, and noise level all contribute to the inability to comprehend oral messages.

In summary, there are several causes of why listening skills are declining. They are not being taught by the teacher due to the lack of time and curriculum. Also, teachers lack the skills needed to teach listening. Thirdly, listening skills are not encouraged. Next, children are deficient in the skills necessary to listen effectively. The last two causes are

the amount of time students watch television and physical distractions. These issues need to be addressed in order for students to be effective and successful listeners.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

After reviewing the literature concerning the improvement of listening skills with relation to following directions, the researchers suggest several possible courses of action. According to U.S. Public Law 95-561, the Elementary and Secondary Act in 1978 was amended to include listening among the basic skills (Funk & Funk, 1989). If listening is a skill to be taught, a range of methods should be examined. The most effective way to meet the demands of curricular expectations with limited time constraints, and still include listening skills, is to integrate the instruction naturally. In this way, listening will not be treated as a separate entity, but will be incorporated as a major communication skill in all facets of learning (Edwards, 1991). One of the best ways to make certain that listening is addressed is to identify listening goals and incorporate them into the curriculum guides and student portfolios (Jalongo, 1996).

Listening Skills Should Be Taught

Integration of listening goals into the curriculum does not need to be lengthy. Teachers can employ numerous simple techniques to help children listen more effectively. To begin with, teachers can model good listening skills. They should get down to the child's eye level, hear the child out, and strive to understand the child's meaning. Children need to be reassured that they will be heard. Next, teachers can create a listening environment by making deliberate efforts to help children focus, eliminating distractions, and overcoming barriers to listening such as physical needs and psychological conditions (Jalongo, 1996). For example, before reading a story aloud to the class, the teacher can make an effort to select a quiet time of day and a comfortable and spacious location. Sitting beside them may encourage more children to listen and participate. In addition, the

teacher can set the purpose for children to listen by pointing out in advance what is important. This enables children to channel their energies appropriately and concentrate on meaning. Also, the teacher can assess children's prior knowledge and keep them actively involved in the activity. Children listen better when they know they will be called upon to reflect and respond (Jalongo, 1996). Using an activity to quickly assess what a child already knows, wants to know, and has learned at the conclusion of a unit or lesson (K.W.L.) can be a useful technique to encourage students to listen and respond.

Another type of integration into basic classroom curriculum to employ methods that can enhance opportunities for children to practice listening and responding was developed by Anderson and Brent (1994). They suggest providing authentic experiences for children to listen during one-on-one conferences (Anderson & Brent, 1994). This gives students more time to express ideas. Moreover, class discussions are important for all students to contribute and feel valued.

Students can also assist in the listening process by using specific strategies that enhance their own ability. According to Schnell (1985), students should practice listening for content (what is said) and feeling (how it is said) and respond to both. Active listening requires restatement to ensure understanding. In order for this method to be effective, teachers should monitor the children's statements and question their validity.

Students could also benefit from learning to use their "inner speech "(Healy, 1990). They will be able to use this strategy to understand (What is the teacher asking me to do?), to plan solutions (Maybe I should read the directions before I begin working), and to evaluate (Did I do this right?). Students should be able to visualize the activity before they begin. Using this "mind's eye" can help them become more accurate listeners since they are comprehending the message as they go (Healy, 1993).

Active listening, in which students are involved in the oral message, is shown to improve a child's comprehension. Jalongo (1996) gives four strategies to increase active listening. First is to restate the message given. Children do this most effectively by

putting the messages into their own words. Next is to summarize the message. Telling a partner or small group what the activity consists of is an excellent opportunity to practice this skill. Students could also use a reflection technique in which an opinion of their performance can be shared. Last is self-assessment where children keep track of their own progress and report it to other classmates, teachers, and parents. Using these four strategies to develop active listening can give students the opportunity to respond in an appropriate manner and understand the message more fully (Jalongo, 1996).

In order for any listening program to be effective, teachers need to be involved in training programs to become equipped with a knowledge of all strategies. This would better prepare them to implement any new techniques.

Proper Training for Teachers

If any program for teaching students how to listen is to be implemented, there must be a sequential procedure. To begin with, the teacher and class must identify the needed skill or strategy (Anderson & Brent, 1993). Providing a purpose for this particular skill accomplishes the task. This guidance increases children's comprehension and retention (Anderson & Brent, 1993). A list generated by Funk and Funk (1989) includes the skills most commonly used in the classroom. First, the teacher should p ritize the list and select the one to be taught. Second, children should be instructed on how to perform the skill. Using a permanent visual aid can assist instruction as well as be used as a review tool. After the skill has been taught, the teacher will need to provide opportunities for practice. Techniques such as author's chair, writing workshop, cooperative groups, and reader's theater will facilitate the use of the listening skill. Setting the stage before the activities begin by eliminating distractions and terminating prior activities is essential for success. In order for students to continue using the listening skill effectively after the lesson is complete, it is important to provide for follow-up experiences and an opportunity to review. This should be well planned and implemented immediately following the listening activity. By allowing for extensions, children realize there is a reason for

listening, and the information gained will be used (Funk & Funk, 1989). Once teachers have a full understanding of the process used to teach listening skills to children, it is up to them to encourage children to use them.

Listening Skills Need to be Encouraged

Not only do listening skills need to be taught, they need to be encouraged both in instructional settings and social settings. Many teachers may not have had the training to create classroom contexts that foster talk, since this view is quite different from the one stressed in teacher education programs even a few years ago (Hiebert, 1990). Teachers need to provide time for social interactions as a means for learning, as part of literacy periods, and as a way to integrate across the curriculum.

As teachers listen to students, they teach kids to listen to their "inner voices" (Healy, 1993). As a result, kids learn to ask their own questions. Eventually, the students are made more aware of the depth of their knowledge and experiences. The intent is for students to set their own listening goals. An additional method of encouraging listening is to allow students to "play teacher" (Graves, 1995). They would require their "students" to talk quietly to themselves or to a partner about what they are learning, process their performance, and set goals for the next activity.

Another productive way of encouraging active listening is to construct a learning situation where the child has to listen and understand a message in order to solve a problem or perform a task (Edwards, 1991). In other words, the child is placed in a situation where he/she cannot proceed until acting upon the directions. If children become confused or misunderstand the message, it forces them to use their ability to ask questions or clarify directions.

Paulos and Swafford (1993) suggest an approach to encourage listening skills. The listening experience integrates science content, oral reading of a trade book, and components of a Structured Listening Activity (SLA) to promote active listening. The components of SLA include; 1) activating and building background knowledge; 2) setting

a purpose for listening; 3) reading aloud by the teacher by highlighting visuals and encouraging students' predictions; 4) asking questions during and after reading; and 5) summarizing the story (Paulos & Swafford, 1993). Using the information gathered from the SLA activity, students can complete a science lesson. In addition, students have used a great deal of other essential thinking skills which are presented in an integrated manner. Listening does not need to be the sole objective of an activity. When listening is weaved into other curricular lessons, children have the opportunity for authentic practice, and teacher planning time is condensed (Paulos & Swafford, 1993). When children get the chance to practice in an authentic situation, their general proficiency with each skill will rise. This leads to a greater ability to listen.

Ability vs. Nonability

When discussing how to improve listening skills, teachers must take into account the child's ability or nonability to learn the skills. Some children have cognitive barriers in working memory which interfere with their ability to listen and interpret directions. These students need to be taught alternative methods to receive and process oral messages. The amount of information in working memory can be increased by chunking or grouping material heard (Carullo, Collins, & Engle, 1991). The teacher can increase chunk size by using techniques the student already knows. When working with materials of a verbal nature, children tend to rely on phonological cues to represent that material in working memory. This could take the form of word order and/or sound-a-like words. Teachers can provide directions that minimize the burden on working memory by presenting oral messages in a way that utilizes the chunks in a child's working memory (Carullo, et al., 1991). Not only will students with listening difficulties benefit, but all students will.

Misunderstanding an oral message is a continual determinant to effective listening in a classroom. Keeping in mind that words are merely sounds that one infers meaning from, it becomes necessary to clarify if what the intent was when spoken is what was interpreted when heard. Having children repeat the message can be a quick method of

checking for misinterpretation (Pearce, 1995). In addition, when students are listening, they are drawing from past experiences. Therefore, the students should be sure that what they have interpreted has not been biased by those experiences. Children often connect an oral message to something they already know and do not recognize variations that message may have from their experience. Because better listening ability requires better self-control, students should know what their biases are and try to overcome them (Pearce, 1995). This can be accomplished by asking students to tell a partner what they heard the message to be. The partner, in turn, can check for bias or misunderstanding. Also, semantic listening distractions can occur when words and phrases are used differently or have unlike meanings (Pearce, 1995). This becomes quite common between the youth culture and the adult culture. To eliminate semantic distracters, the teacher, as well as the students, can clarify the meaning of unfamiliar spoken phrases.

Not only are semantic distractors a factor in the misinterpretation of oral messages, but mass media also plays a direct role. There is a definate need for a decrease in the amount of influence the media can have on our children.

Need for Decrease in Mass Media Influence

Mass media can have a significant effect on the interpretation of an oral message. Advertisements, political infomercials, and television sitcoms can distort a simple phrase into several possible meanings. Teaching children propaganda techniques through analysis of television and radio advertisements forces them to use evaluative listening skills. Cramond (1993) recommends viewing as well as listening to various types of media to determine whether the arguments are logical or fallacious. Encouraging children to engage in social interactions, rather than mass doses of media, would promote better listening skills. If a child can engage appropriately in a social setting, it may open the door for alternative ways of practicing listening skills.

Alternative Techniques

There are extensions to basic listening strategies. Foreign language study is one option which requires students to listen to a higher degree compared to their own native language. Sociodrama is another alternative. Students become aware of themselves and others by exchanging roles and presenting arguments from another person's point of view (Cramond, 1993). Also, a musical activities program not only fosters listening, but also lends itself to singing, playing musical instruments, movement, and creativity. For instance, being able to play a musical instrument requires hearing the beat and discovering the rhythm (Bygrave, 1994). Finding alternative ways to incorporate listening into a child's life, can also be an excellent way to increase parental involvement.

Parental Involvement

Keeping parents involved in teaching children how to listen can be as simple as sending home flyers which give suggestions for activities to practice at home. Some examples are: giving undivided attention to a child when he/she speaks, giving precise directions for tasks to be completed at home, reading stories aloud and discussing them, and giving a variety of experiences to listen and respond to stimuli (Jalongo, 1996). The advantage of sharing information with parents about improving children's listening is that nearly all parents immediately recognize listening's importance (Jalongo, 1996).

In conclusion, classroom activities offer excellent opportunities for students to become good listeners. Teachers need to model good listening, teach effective skill and strategy lessons, and provide meaningful reasons for listening. It is essential to encourage good listening through a combination of authentic experiences and teaching interrelated strategies, each strengthened by the presence of the other. Children learn by noticing the teacher's effective listening habits, participating in specific listening skill instruction, and repeatedly practicing what they have learned in meaningful settings. According to Jalongo, "When teachers build children's listening skills, they are making an important

contribution that will serve the child well not only during early childhood, but also throughout life" (1996, p. 28).

Project Objective

As a result of "The Program for Listening Success," during the period from September, 1997 through December, 1997, the third, fourth, fifth, and eighth graders of the targeted class will improve their listening skills in order for them to follow directions more efficiently as measured by a pre/post test.

Process Statements

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1) Teaching what listening is;

2) Distinguishing between the different types of listening;

3) Preparing to listen;

4) Becoming active listeners;

5) Responding appropriately to messages.

Project Action Plan

1. Weeks 1-2

   A. What is listening? The goal is for students to understand what listening is and to introduce the four types of listening.

      1. Introduce the concept of listening and define it
      2. Discuss the process of listening
      3. Dispel listening myths
      4. Teach types of listening

   B. Assessment

      1. Pre-test
      2. Teacher reflective journal
      3. Student reflective journal

4. Teacher survey
5. Parent survey
6. Student survey
7. Following directions chart

C. Time schedule

1. 45 minutes per week

II. Weeks 3-5

A. How to distinguish between different types of listening? The goal is for students to acquire the skills they need to listen effectively in different situations.

1. Appreciative
2. Empathic
3. Comprehensive
4. Evaluative

B. Assessment

1. Teacher reflective journal
2. Student reflective journal
3. Following directions chart

C. Time Schedule

1. 45 minutes per week

III. Weeks 6-7

A. Preparing to listen. The goal is for students to get into the right frame of mind and to set the stage for successful listening.

1. Listening Attention Levels (LAL)
2. Identifying distractions
3. Getting rid of distractions
4. Paying attention

5. Your listening attitude

B. Assessment

1. Teacher reflective journal
2. Student reflective journal
3. Following directions chart

C. Time Schedule

1. 45 minutes per week

IV. Weeks 8-9

A. Active listening. The goal is for students to visualize and re-auditorize as well as listen to verbal cues.

1. Mind's eye
2. Mind's ear
3. Remembering long messages
4. Listening for what is important

B. Assessment

1. Teacher reflective journal
2. Student reflective journal
3. Following directions chart

C. Time Schedule

1. 45 minutes per week

V. Weeks 10-11

A. Responding to a message. The goal is for students to learn that responding to a speaker can help their understanding of a message.

1. Giving feedback
2. Asking questions

B. Assessment

1. Teacher reflective journal

2. Student reflective journal
3. Following directions chart
4. Student P.M.I.
5. Post-test
6. Teacher survey
7. Student survey
8. Student survey

C. Time Schedule

1. 45 minutes per week

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the listening intervention, oral pre/post tests containing multiple-step directions will be given. Growth will be determined by the comparative scores on the two tests. In addition, a chart tracking the percentage of children who can comprehend directions within a certain number of repeated attempts will visually show growth over time. Teacher reflective journals will provide feedback on lessons each week. Students will record their opinion in a reflective journal as well as a P.M.I. upon conclusion of the unit.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase a child's ability to listen to and interpret oral directions. The implementation of a listening program was selected to effect the desired change.

The listening program was used to teach what listening is, to distinguish between the different types of listening, to teach children to prepare to listen, to teach children how to become active listeners and how to respond appropriately to oral messages. The skills were taught directly over an 11 week period and assessed with a post-test of general listening skills. The plan called for two 45 minute sessions per week during which a specific listening skill was presented by the teacher and then practiced by the students. If teachers noted that a conflict arose, the sessions were made up in order to maintain the original plan. When teachers perceived that children did not have sufficient time, they provided students with additional practice by integrating the listening skills into other oral activities. The skills chosen to be taught to the class included the different types of listening, lessons to prepare children to listen, lessons on how to become active listeners, and ways to respond appropriately to oral messages. In order to reinforce the skills, students were given regular class directions and were required to identify certain elements pertaining to the lessons within the directions before beginning the activity. This occurred at the discretion of the teacher and was usually done orally.

In order for the program to become completely effective, the teachers felt some additional activities needed to be covered. The teacher at Site A used a video to enhance the skills. This included a study sheet with additional practice activities. The teacher at Site C included an activity where students were asked to sit back-to-back. One student was given a picture and told to explain the drawing to his partner. The classmate had to draw the picture by listening to the oral directions. The results of the program in its entirety were eye-opening and interesting.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

The assessments used in this program showed positive results. Pre/post tests, following directions checklists, and teacher/student reflective journals were the evaluative measures used. Listed below are the results of these measures.

Pre/Post-tests

In order to assess the effects of the listening program, a post-test was given upon completion, and it was compared to the results of the initial pre-test. The numbers below reflect the average percentage of correct answers students received on the pre-test and post-test. The results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Comparison of Pre/Post-tests

Sites	Pre-test	Post-test
Site A	37%	57%
Site B	31%	58%
Site C	62%	70%

As you can see, all three sites showed improvement in listening ability. Site B revealed the greatest improvement at 27%. One possible reason for this significant growth could be the age appropriateness of the students involved. Furthermore, these students took a positive approach toward each activity and enjoyed the obvious growth they could see themselves making. Site A improved 20%, which can also be seen as a notable improvement. The students at Site A were the youngest subjects of the study. This could be one factor affecting the lower percentage of improvement compared to Site B. Site C demonstrated the lowest percentage of growth; however, the initial average of the class began at a rate that was higher than the final scores of the other two sites allowing less room for improvement. As with any assessment, one method

cannot sufficiently measure growth. Others methods, such as a following directions checklist, are also needed.

Following Directions Checklist

In addition to a pre/post-test, a checklist documenting the amount of times students needed to hear directions before beginning a task, was given periodically to determine if an impact was being made during the intervention. The checklist showed the percentage of students who responded to oral directions after having heard the directions one, two, or three or more times. The results of the checklist are shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Results of Following Directions Checklist

Sites	Weeks 1-4			Weeks 5-8			Weeks 9-11		
	1x	2x	3x+	1x	2x	3x+	1x	2x	3x+
Site A	17%	57%	26%	27%	44%	29%	32%	51%	17%
Site B	10%	31%	59%	29%	56%	15%	31%	55%	14%
Site C	22%	32%	46%	31%	47%	22%	42%	45%	13%

Once again, the results of the table showed the most significant improvement at Site B. This would correlate with the results from the pre/post-tests. Over 80% of students at all three sites responded to oral directions after hearing them once or twice. Moreover, the percentage of students who needed to hear the directions three times or more decreased due to the intervention. With less than 20% of every class needing to hear directions three or more times, teachers can move more swiftly through lessons and keep more children on task. Many variables that could come into play were recorded in the teacher and student reflective journals.

Teacher and Student Reflective Journals

The teachers and students from all three sites kept journals recording information regarding how the listening program was progressing. The teacher at Site A noted that students

were surprised that there was a difference between "listening" and "hearing." Most of the students felt they knew how to listen, but after a classroom discussion, realized there was much to learn. The students were eager to learn the new listening skills. One teacher at Site B felt that some of the material in the listening program was either irrelevant or too difficult for children's complete comprehension. The students had trouble transferring their skills to other areas and also needed practice in applying these skills to themselves. The second Site B teacher perceived that the students were having fun with the activities but were not always comprehending that they were supposed to be learning something. On the other hand, a few students noticed the growth and felt that they had begun to listen better. The students at Site C were surprised that 42% of their day is spent listening. They seemed to realize the importance of learning listening skills. The teacher's instruction on listening attention levels also helped students understand the amount of energy needed to pay attention depending on the different listening situations. Site C's teacher further concluded that being in eighth grade and the social pressures of teenagers can play a significant role in listening attention levels and whether or not students decide to take the initiative to raise their listening skills. The teachers at each site had varying results, and recommendations can be made on all of their experiences.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the teachers felt the program was a success. Most students improved their ability to interpret oral directions because of the intervention. One significant lesson was when children could identify the distracters, minimize them, and continue to listen to the oral message. Furthermore, the teaching of LALs (listening attention levels) empowered the students to modify their level to the degree necessary in order to listen effectively. In general, teaching students alternative strategies enabled them to become better listeners. The researchers feel that a listening program should be implemented in all classrooms if children are expected to listen effectively. Curriculum guides need to include a listening component, and material should be made readily available. Additionally, staff development and ongoing support would help supplement the listening program.

As with any program, teachers must be aware of certain drawbacks. The tasks on the checklist should have been gauged according to difficulty as well as variety. Instead of only listing the content area in which directions were given, difficulty and length of the directions should have been incorporated into the following directions checklist. For example, directions for a science experiment may take fifteen minutes, whereas directions for a spelling test may only consume a couple of minutes. Also, the holidays and time of day could have swayed the results. Any disruption in the schedule, which ranged from one day to several days, caused children to become inattentive. In addition, teaching listening skills in the morning was more effective than teaching the skills in the afternoon. As a result, at these times the listening levels decreased. Teachers need to take into account the students' social, emotional, and academic ability before activities are implemented. Each lesson and activity should have a real-life application if children are expected to internalize the listening skills. In order to do this, listening should be taught more than twice a week, and it should be an ongoing and integrative approach to facilitate transfer of learning. A team approach would further promote any efforts a single teacher may choose to endeavor. The four teachers involved in this action research plan would like to see this program implemented in more classrooms within their school and district.

Moreover, if this listening program was implemented nationwide, children would be become better listeners. For instance, one problem stated by Lundsteen (as cited in Jalongo, 1996) is that children are repeatedly exposed to hundreds of noises, oral messages, and distractions which interfere with the listening process. The strategy of teaching children "listening attention levels" (LALs) from this intervention would help to eliminate the problem. This could then minimize frustrations teachers feel by continually repeating directions. It will help children's awareness of the problems they face when it comes to listening now and in the future. Hundsaker (as cited in Anderson & Brent, 1994) states that adults operate at no better than a 25% efficiency level. Instructing children how to maximize their listening capabilities will enable them to be more effective adult listeners.

The strength of this program lies in the fact that it teaches children how to identify listening distracters, their listening attention levels, and how to visualize messages that are given using their mind's eye. However, the program had weaknesses as well. Research done by Garman & Garman (as cited in Jalongo, 1996) shows that physical conditions such as fatigue, abuse, hunger, and/or illness all interfere with children's ability to listen. This program does not teach children how to listen better if they are faced with these situations or how to adapt to those circumstances. Also, the psychological conditions such as mental health and language proficiency are not addressed in the program. If these factors are to be incorporated into the listening program, further research needs to be done in the weak areas. Further expansion of the program could utilize ensuing research on how to teach children to adapt to these situations.

REFERENCES

Anderson, P. & Brent, R., (Oct. 1993). Developing children's classroom listening strategies. The Reading Teacher, 47(2). 122-26.

Anderson, P. & Brent, R., (Jan. 1994). Teaching kids how to listen. Education Digest, 59(5). 67-70.

Bygrave, P., (1994). Development of listening skills in students in special education settings. International Journal of Disability Development Education, 41(1). 51-60.

Carullo, J., Collins, K. & Engle, R., (1991). Individual differences in working memory for comprehension and following directions. Journal of Educational Research, 84(5). 253-62.

Cramond, B., (Sept. 1993). Speaking and listening: Key components of a complete language arts program for the gifted. Roeper Review, 16(1). 44-48.

Cummings, J. & Nelson, B., (1985). University of Georgia, basic concepts on the oral directions of group achievement tests. The Journal of Educational Research, 6. 259-61.

Edwards, P., (Mar. 1991). The neglected language art. ERIC. 1-12.

Funk, G. & Funk, H., (May 1989). Guidelines for developing listening skills. The Reading Teacher, 23. 660-63.

Graves, D., (Sept. 1995). Teacher as listener. Instructor, 105(2). 3[illegible].

Healy, J., (Sept. 1990). Helping kids hear their inner voices. Learning, 19(2). 85-86.

Hiebert, E., (Sept. 1990). Research directions: Starting with oral language. Language Arts, 67(2). 502-6.

Jacobs, L., (Nov./Dec. 1986). Listening-a skill we can teach. Early Years, 12. 109-110.

Jalongo, M., (Jan. 1996). Teaching young children to become better listeners. Young Children, 51(2). 21-26.

Paulos, T. & Swafford, J., (1993). Creating experiences for listening and learning. Reading Horizons, 33(5). 401-17.

Pearce, G., (Feb. 1995). Emotional listening: How students can measure and eliminate this barrier to learning. Business Education Forum, 49(3), 31-32.

Schell, J., (1985). Effective Listening: More than just hearing. ERIC. 1-7.

School Report Card (1996).

Strother, D., (1987). On listening. Phi Delta Kappan, 68(8), 625-28.

Winn, D., (1988). Developing listening skills as a part of the curriculum. The Reading Teacher, 42(2), 144-46.

APPENDIX A

LISTENING TO DIRECTIONS STUDENT SURVEY

Listening to Directions

Please answer the following questions by putting a check (✓) by only one choice.

1. How many times do you like to hear directions before you can get started?

___1 time ___3 times

___2 times ___4 or more times

2. Which factor below gets in the way the most when you are trying to listen to directions?

___noise level ___time of day

___hunger ___subject area

___classroom temperature ___type of task

3. Which type of directions gets you started the quickest?

___oral directions only ___both oral and written directions

___written directions only

Please answer the following questions by writing 3 choices you feel are the best.

4. What do you do to help listen to directions?

1._____

2._____

3._____

5. What could you do if you didn't get the directions on the first try?

1._____

2._____

3._____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX B

LISTENING TO DIRECTIONS PARENT SURVEY

Listening to Directions

As part of my research project, I will be collecting data on listening skills. Please take the time to fill out this survey. The results will be used strictly for percentages. No names will be used.

Please answer the following questions by putting a check ( ) by only one choice.

1. How many times does your child like to hear directions before they can get started?

   __1 time __3 times

   __2 times __4 or more times

2. Which factor below gets in the way the most when your child is trying to listen to directions?

   __noise level __time of day

   __hunger __subject

   __room temperature __type of task

3. Which type of directions gets your child started the quickest?

   __oral directions only __both oral and written directions

   __written directions only

Please answer the following questions by writing 3 choices you feel are best.

4. What do you do to help your child listen to directions?

   1. _____

   2. _____

   3. _____

5. What could you do if your child didn't get the directions on the first try?

   1. _____

   2. _____

   3. _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX C

LISTENING TO DIRECTIONS TEACHER SURVEY

Listening to Directions

As part of my research project, I will be collecting data on listening skills. Please take the time to fill out this survey. The results will be used strictly for percentages. No names will be used.
Please answer the following questions by putting a check (√) by only one choice

1. How many times does your class like to hear directions before they can get started?

___1 time ___3 times

___2 times ___4 or more times

2. Which factor below gets in the way the most when your class is trying to listen to directions?

___noise level ___time of day

___hunger ___subject area

___classroom temperature ___type of task

3. Which type of directions gets your class started the quickest?

___oral directions only ___both oral and written directions

___written directions only

Please answer the following questions by writing 3 choices you feel are the best

4. What do you do to help your class listen to directions?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

5. What could you do if your class didn't get the directions on the first try?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX D

PICTURE SURPRISES PRE-TEST

Picture Surprises

About this activity...

This two-part activity starts with shapes and symbols which are then turned into pictures of familiar objects.

Materials needed...

Worksheet (see illustration), pencil.

Directions to students...

Our activity today is called "Picture Surprises." It is an activity in two parts. For the first part, you will need to listen and follow directions very carefully. For the second part, you will also have to listen, but you will need to do some thinking on your own. Let's begin by numbering the boxes 1-16, starting at the top left-hand box and going from left to right, row by row. Put the numbers beneath the boxes.

- In Box 1, draw a large plus sign. Leave some space between the plus sign and the edges of the box.
- In Box 2, draw three small circles side by side. Leave a little space between the circles.
- In Box 3, draw a tall, skinny "V." Start at the bottom of the box and leave some room at the top.
- In Box 4, draw a long, thin rectangle with its long sides going across, not up and down. Leave some room between the ends of the rectangle and the edges of the box.
- In Box 5, draw a simple shape that looks like a lake which you are looking at from above.
- In Box 6, draw two up-and-down lines next to each other . . . like an "11". Put them in the center of the box.
- In Box 7, make a large letter "J" in the middle of the box.
- In Box 8, draw two fairly small circles side by side. Put them in the middle of the box and leave a little space between them.
- In Box 9, draw a square which is about half as big as the box itself. Put it in the lower part of the box.
- In Box 10, make six small "1's" close together in a row near the right-hand side of the box.
- In Box 11, draw a shape like a person's eye . . . or like a canoe seen from above.
- In Box 12, draw a rectangle with its long sides about twice as long as its short sides.
- In Box 13, draw a large, upside-down capital letter "T." Leave room at the top and bottom of the box.
- In Box 14, draw three small letter "o's," one on top of another. Put them in the center of the box.
- In Box 15, draw a big letter "X" in the middle of the box.
- In Box 16, draw an upside-down letter "U." Put it in the top part of the box.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX E

DRAWING A PICTURE PRE-TEST

EIGHTH-GRADE DIRECTIONS FOR DRAWING A PICTURE

PRE-TEST

1. Hold your paper so both hands are on the two tall sides.

2. Write your name on the back in the upper right-hand corner.

3. On the other side (where your name is not seen), draw two horizontal lines in the bottom right corner of the paper.

4. Write neither the word *cat* nor the word *dog* in the center of the paper.

5. In the top right corner of the paper, draw an arrow that points diagonally down to the right.

6. Draw a circle in the top center of the paper with an arrow on it that points counterclockwise.

7. Below the circle write two adjectives that describe a detective.

8. If the top of your paper is north, then draw a heart on the southwest part of your paper.

9. If the center right side of your paper is south, then draw a square on the northeast part of your paper.

10. Above the heart on your paper, draw a picture of a person who is looking at you and holding up his right arm.

11. On the bottom center of your page, draw three different-length vertical lines that are in order from the shortest to the longest.

12. Draw a horizontal wavy line that goes all the way across your paper. Draw it two-thirds of the way up from the bottom of the page.

13. Draw an upside-down triangle in the center of the paper and a star on any point of the triangle.

Teacher only says each direction one time.

APPENDIX F

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS CHECKLIST

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS CHECKLIST

Date	Activity	How many times? 1	2	3 or more